

family@church

making family worship easier

Service Plans

YEAR ONE

Page 38	December	Christingle Service
42	January	Epiphany
46	February	Candlemas
50	March	Lent
54	April	Easter
60	May	Ascension/Pentecost
64	June	Trinity
68	July	Saints
72	August	Jesus at the beach
76	September	'Back to School' Service
80	October	Harvest
83	November	Remembrance
87+	<i>Year Two Service Plans</i>	

December – A Christingle Service

What you'll need for this service:

- Christingles (oranges, candles, ribbon, sweets, cocktail sticks)
- Phone/iPad to take a selfie (Talk)
- Crib scene (without Magi) (Prayers)

Before the service:

- Remember to pray together or to encourage prayer amongst all your team groups.
- Make up the cocktail sticks with sweets for the Christingles and place on four different trays labelled: Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter

God's Family Gathers

Give a warm welcome to the church. Point out the toilets if you need to. Draw attention to the Welcome Cards. Keep other notices for the end.

God is with us now. In his love...

We admit that we sometimes get things wrong.

Sometimes we fail to let our light shine.

Sometimes we try to put other peoples' light out too.

Father, forgive us.

All Father, forgive us.

Sometimes we don't let the light of Jesus in.

Sometimes we try to shut God out and have our own way.

Sometimes we shut God up in a box so he can't be seen.

Father, forgive us.

All Father, forgive us.

+ May the God of light, who sent Jesus to Light up the way, shine upon you, forgive you your sins and keep you in life eternal. Amen.

SONG

God's Family Listens

Reading: Matthew 1:18-23

Talk

I love waiting at the end of each year to hear what new words the dictionary will be adding to its list. New words this year (2015) include *conceptor* and *hoverboard* and *telly*. [You can research new words on Google!]

A few years back the word 'selfie' was added to the dictionary. Who knows what a selfie is? Have you ever taken a selfie? Who has a selfie that they might be able to show us now?

Well, the word selfie may be a new word, but the idea has been around for a long time. Before cameras, some artists would paint themselves from a reflection in the water or a mirror. That's kind of like a selfie.

However, God came up with the idea of a selfie first 2000 years ago! When God looked at the world, he saw that it wasn't the way he made it to be. Things needed to change. Instead of light, there was darkness. Instead of goodness, there was hate. The only solution to help us was for God to send a selfie. That's right! Jesus!

Jesus is God's selfie, sent to us. Jesus is the image of what God looks like. When Jesus was born on earth all those years ago, it was as if God had taken a selfie of himself and sent it to us. When we look at that selfie, we see God, we see what God is like, we see how much God loves us.

God's selfie is the best selfie ever! It's a selfie that everyone can have. It's a selfie that changes the world. Jesus said: I am the Light of the World, and I shine in the darkest of all rooms and situations. I am the Light of the World, and I can show you the way even when you think there is no way. I am the Light and I want you to be part of my family – a family of light. I am the Light and I never go out.

So I wonder, as we look for baby Jesus in the manger, what we see? Well, we see God's perfect selfie, Jesus, sent to us. He is the Light of the World and that's what our Christingle candles will remind us of. God's selfie will last for ever. Nothing will be able to put out his light.

I wonder if we can take a selfie now? *Using your phone or iPad, take a photo of you and the whole congregation so that people might see it as they leave church. Explain that anyone who doesn't want to be in the photo can look away, but it will be deleted after this service.*

SONG

God's Family Prays

The Christingles – we are going on a journey now. A journey through the year: Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter. In the four corners of the church you will find treats – four sticks to crown your Christingles. Take one stick from each corner. As you take a stick from each corner, I wonder if you can look back at the past year – the highlights and achievements of your year.

When you've travelled to the four corners of the church and reflected on the year that has gone by, come to the centre of the church to have your Christingle lit.

Let people move, play relaxing music – live music if possible.

Gather children (with adults!) to the centre of the church, sitting around you...

When we look back at the year that we've had, we can be joyful that God was there with us. This candle tells us that Jesus is always with us – his light never ever goes out!

You may want to Bless the Crib here

Lights out, candles lit...

SONG (*Away in a manger*)

Prayers should be short and punchy...

Lord's Prayer (Modern)

God's Family Goes!

**All We believe in God the Father,
from whom every family...**

Church Family Notices can be shared here.

Blessing:

*May the joy of the angels,
the eagerness of the shepherds,
the perseverance of the wise men,
the obedience of Joseph and Mary,
and the peace of the Christ child
be yours this Christmas;
+ and the blessing of God almighty... Amen.*

SONG

Song suggestions:

Longing for light (Farrell)
Once in Royal David's city (trad)
This little light of mine (Spiritual)
Silent night (trad)
Hark! the herald angels sing (trad)
The Christingle Song (*Children's Society website*)
Away in a manger (trad)
Light of the World (*Contemporary*)
Shine, Jesus, Shine (Kendrick)
O holy night (trad)
Arise, Shine (Kendrick)
Light up a Candle (Christmas Songs of Fellowship)

Notes

January - Epiphany

What you'll need for this service:

- Large items to represent gold, frankincense and myrrh (Talk)
- Gift tags (Prayers)
- Wise men figures for your Crib
- Two wrapped pass the parcels (Optional Talk opening)

Before the service:

- Remember to pray together or to encourage prayer amongst all your team groups.
- Place gift tags in pews or give out with hymnbooks.
- Display gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh.

God's Family Gathers

Give a warm welcome to the church. Point out the toilets if you need to. Draw attention to the Welcome Cards. Keep other notices for the end.

Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.
And also with you.

Ask if anyone has any church family news – this may include birthdays. Introduce the theme and lead into...

We admit that we sometimes say terrible things...

All Father, forgive us.

We do foolish and silly things...

All Father, forgive us.

+ May Almighty God have mercy upon you, pardon and deliver you from all your sins, confirm and strengthen you in all goodness and bring you to life eternal, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SONG

God's Family Listens

Reading: Matthew 2:1-12

Talk

[Play pass the parcel – use two parcels.]

or

[When you look back, what is the best present you've ever had? What gift have you been given that you've never forgotten?

Ask people what their favourite gift might be.

Giving gifts is important. It is a sign that we love someone, or a sign that we are celebrating a festival, like Christmas. It is a sign that we are kind people – we are giving something to someone having bought it with our money or made it with our hands.]

Today we celebrate the Epiphany – the journey of the Wise Men to visit the baby Jesus. These were very important people and people would have listened to what they said. They were professional astrologers –

they told the people around them what might happen in the world according to what the stars, sun, moon and even the planet was telling them. People believed that things could be predicted by reading the stars.

Some people thought they were a bit crazy! In the stars though, they saw that the King of the Jews would be born – Jesus. They were crazy enough to set off to find Jesus years before he was born – they travelled thousands of miles.

Not only were they crazy enough to believe that if they followed the star they would find the new born King Jesus, but they even brought with them gifts of Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh – expensive gifts, trusting that they would truly find the Son of God.

Gold – for a King (show something gold). Expensive and precious – Joseph and Mary probably used the gold to escape to Egypt.

Frankincense – to symbolise that Jesus would offer himself to the world (burn some or show some)

Myrrh – a spice used to anoint bodies, symbolising the death that Jesus would face. Myrrh was also mixed with wine as a drink – Jesus was probably given it to drink whilst he was on the cross.

So these were important gifts to tell the world how much Jesus meant to everyone, to tell people just how important he was.

If you were in that group of Wise Men what gift would you bring Jesus? Some clothes, maybe some toys! What would you give to a really important person? What would you give to God?

God doesn't ask for presents or gifts. What God really asks of us is..... us! God loves us and knows us completely, and he wants us to know him too.

*What can I give him – poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd I would give a lamb.
If I were a wise man I would do my part.
Yet, what I can I give him – give my heart.*

SONG

God's Family Prays

When we pray, we can talk to God and give to him our lives.

In your pews you'll find a gift tag to go on a present. Jesus is the greatest present of all – a gift for me and you.

We'll have a few minutes now to write down our prayers on the gift tags. After this, we'll pray together and then bring up our tags.

Short, punchy prayers are led... World, Church, Others, Us...

End with the Epiphany Collect

Creator of the heavens,
who led the Magi by a star to worship the Christ-child:
guide and sustain us, that we may find our journey's end
in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Let us follow the star to leave our prayers with Jesus. As you move forward to leave your prayers, some music will be played.

Lord's Prayer (Modern)

SONG

God's Family Goes!

If there is a returning baptism family, see Leader's Insert

All **We believe in God the Father,
from whom every family...**

Church Family Notices can be shared here.

Blessing:

+ *May God the Father,
who led the wise men by the shining of a star
to find the Christ, the Light from Light,
lead you also in your pilgrimage to find the Lord.
And the blessing of God Almighty... Amen.*

SONG

Song suggestions:

We Three Kings (trad)
Angels from the realms of glory (trad)
As with gladness men of old (trad)
See him lying on a bed of straw (trad)
In the bleak midwinter (trad)
Joy has dawned upon the world (Getty/Townend)
Joy to the world (trad)

Notes

February - Candlemas

What you'll need for this service:

- A selection of candles and lights to show during the Talk.
- Small candles for congregation to light (Prayers)

Before the service:

- Remember to pray together or to encourage prayer amongst all your team groups.
- Line up candles for lighting during the Prayers.

God's Family Gathers

Give a warm welcome to the church. Point out the toilets if you need to. Draw attention to the Welcome Cards. Keep other notices for the end.

Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.
And also with you.

Ask if anyone has any family church news – this may include birthdays. Introduce the theme and lead into...

We admit that we sometimes say terrible things...

All Father, forgive us.

We do foolish and silly things...

All Father, forgive us.

+ May Almighty God have mercy upon you, pardon and deliver you from all your sins, confirm and strengthen you in all goodness and bring you to life eternal, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SONG

God's Family Listens

Reading: Luke 2:22-32

Talk

So what do we use light/candles for? Ask the congregation.

Lighter, candle, torch, light, heat, LED... show items if you have them.

When it was my sister's birthday we went to a lovely pub for a meal. When we had finished eating our food, the waiters brought out the loveliest birthday cake. On the top were two huge candles that were sparkling brightly. When we sang happy birthday, my sister tried to blow out the candles, but they wouldn't blow out! What my sister didn't know, was that the candles were joke/trick candles. In fact, they got bigger and bigger and eventually set off the fire alarms as there was so much smoke!

The idea of a candle is to help us see. In a time when there was no electric bulbs or torches, candles were vital in helping people see. They were put in lanterns and windows. People used candles to help them read books and to see where they were walking.

Candlemas is often the time when people would bring their candles to church to be blessed and to remind themselves that every candle they lit was a symbol of Jesus, the Light of the world.

I wonder what is dark in our world? – when we look on TV and read the papers we might find out! I wonder what parts need a candle to remind them of Jesus?

When Jesus was a little baby boy, he was taken to the temple – a bit like going to church for a baptism. When the priest saw Jesus he was amazed and said: this baby will light up the world. In other words, this baby boy will make those dark places in the world light again. When Jesus had grown up he said: 'I am the light of the world', no one can ever put me out! We read in the bible that from time and time people tried to put out that light, but the light never ever went out.

Today we stand in the middle of Christmas and Easter – we have thought about Jesus being born, now we begin to think about his life, suffering and dying on the cross. As we think about what happened on Good Friday, we need the light that Jesus gives to help us understand.

The light that Jesus has can change the world, and change our lives. If we want that light, Jesus promises to share it with us. If you haven't ever seen the light that Jesus gives, maybe you should ask him to share it with you today.

SONG

God's Family Prays

We're going to talk to God as we pray. When I say 'We thank you God for light', would you repeat it back to me.

We light a candle to say thank you for the Sun – it brightens our days and shows the beauty of God's world. We thank you God for light.

We thank you God for light.

We light a candle to say thank you for the moon and stars which light up the night, and show people the way through the darkness. We thank you God for light.

We thank you God for light.

We light a candle to say thank you for our friends, family and those we love, and for the church family. To pray for those who are sick or ill, or need our help. We thank you God for light.

We thank you God for light.

We light a candle to say thank you to Jesus, the Light of the world, who came to show us the way to God. We thank you God for light.

We thank you God for light.

Around the cross here on the floor are some small candles. Come forward and light a candle as a symbol of your prayer.

End with the Candlemas collect

Lord Jesus Christ, light of the nations and glory of Israel:
make your home among us, and present us pure and holy
to your heavenly Father; your God and our God. Amen.

Lord's Prayer (Modern)

SONG

If there is a returning baptism family, see Leader's Insert

**All We believe in God the Father,
from whom every family...**

Church Family Notices can be shared here.

Blessing:

*+ May Christ, whose light fills the skies,
fill you with his light, gladden and warm your heart,
and guide your feet into the ways of peace;
and the blessing of God Almighty... Amen.*

SONG

Song Suggestions:

Colours of day dawn (trad)
Shine, Jesus, shine! (Kendrick)
Longing for light (Farrell)
Be thou my vision (trad)
The Spirit lives (Walk in the light) (trad)
Like a Candle Flame (Candle Song) (Kendrick)
Light of the world (Hughes)

Notes

March – Lent

What you'll need for this service:

- A4 Card (to draw round hands or use USB stick template)
- Pens
- Scissors

Before the service:

- Remember to pray together or to encourage prayer amongst all your team groups.
- Place card, pens and scissors in pews (or give out in service)

God's Family Gathers

Give a warm welcome to the church. Point out the toilets if you need to. Draw attention to the Welcome Cards. Keep other notices for the end.

Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.
And also with you.

Ask if anyone has any family church news – this may include birthdays. Introduce the theme and lead into...

We admit that we sometimes say terrible things...

All Father, forgive us.

We do foolish and silly things...

All Father, forgive us.

+ *May Almighty God have mercy upon you, pardon and deliver you from all your sins, confirm and strengthen you in all goodness and bring you to life eternal, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

SONG

God's Family Listens

Reading: Matthew 6:1-6

Talk

On your card, draw round both of your hands. Allow a few minutes. So what have you given up for Lent? Chocolate? Sweets? Alcohol? Ask the congregation. I wonder if you've sat down and calculated the time you've had and the cost you've saved since you've given those things up? How much spare or extra time have you got now? How much money have you saved? What are you doing with that extra cash and extra time?

Lent is not necessarily about giving things up! When Jesus went into the desert, he fasted – that meant he didn't eat. That was quite common in his day. Today, Christians don't really fast that often, in fact you may associate fasting, giving up food, with Islam, or with other religions!

When Jesus gave up food, he used the time he had spare to pray and to talk to God. So the time we have spare and the money we have left over, we should use for good. Maybe giving to a charity, or spending extra time with a friend or family.

Lent is not always about giving something up. It's about using our bodies – our whole selves – hands and minds, to do something good in our lives, in the lives of others and in the world. We give something up only to take something on – getting closer to God, praying more or reading more. I wonder what we could achieve if we put all our spare time together – we could do something amazing! Let us use our hands to change the world and to bring joy to those around us.

SONG

God's Family Prays

Hopefully, you've drawn round your hands on the card. On one hand write down something that needs to change in your life. On the other hand write something that needs to change in our world.

Cut out your hands.

At the end of each prayer I read, swap your prayer hands with the people around you.

Father God, we pray to you in faith and ask that you hear our prayer. We thank you for our hands, that with them we can change the world. During the weeks of Lent, help us to use our hands for the good of your world and your church.

SWAP HANDS

Father God, you spent forty days and nights in the desert being tempted and tried. Help us as we give things up and take things on, to stay focused and fixed on the goal, looking forward to Easter. Take our hands, Lord, and lead us not into temptation.

SWAP HANDS

Father God, use our hands to change the world. We think of those who are poor, those who are hungry, those who wake up to face war or violence. Particularly we remember N N N. Prince of peace, bring peace to our world.

SWAP HANDS

Father God, use our hands to build up your church – your family here on earth. Help us to love each other more deeply and bring others into your love, where there is joy and the hope of everlasting life with you. Help us support each other in our Lenten disciplines and to live out our baptismal promises.

SWAP HANDS

End with the Lent collect

Almighty God, by the prayer and discipline of Lent
may we enter into the mystery of Christ's sufferings,
and by following in his way come to share in his glory
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Lord's Prayer (Modern)

SONG

If there is a returning baptism family, see Leader's Insert

**All We believe in God the Father,
from whom every family...**

Church Family Notices can be shared here.

Blessing:

*+ May Christ give you grace to grow in holiness,
to deny yourselves, take up your cross and follow him;
and the blessing of God Almighty... Amen.*

SONG

Song Suggestions:

Forty day and forty nights (trad)
Longing for light (Farrell)
I am a new creation (trad)
Take my life and let it be (trad)
In Christ alone (Getty)
Beauty for brokenness (Kendrick)
From heaven you came (Kendrick)

Notes

April – Easter (when not Communion)

What you'll need for this service:

- Small eggs for an Easter Egg hunt.
- A2 card and marker pens (Talk 2 option)

Before the service:

- Remember to pray together or to encourage prayer amongst all your team groups.
- Hide the Easter eggs inside or out (check the weather!)
- Prepare an example cardboard testimony (Talk 2 option)

God's Family Gathers

Give a warm welcome to the church. Point out the toilets if you need to. Draw attention to the Welcome Cards. Keep other notices for the end.

Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.
And also with you.

Ask if anyone has any family church news – this may include birthdays. Introduce the theme and lead into...

We admit that we sometimes say terrible things...

All Father, forgive us.

We do foolish and silly things...

All Father, forgive us.

+ May Almighty God have mercy upon you, pardon and deliver you from all your sins, confirm and strengthen you in all goodness and bring you to life eternal, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SONG

God's Family Listens

Readings: Acts 10:34-43 and Luke 24:1-5

Talk 1

Last month, we made Lent hands, and wrote our prayers on them. Prayers that could change our lives and prayers that could change the world.

Jesus, on the cross, used his hands. Into those hands horrible nails were driven through and he hung on the cross, slowly dying. They were the same hands that created the universe. At Easter, we celebrate that Jesus didn't stay dead, but that he rose from the grave and that he lives now, that he is with us now.

Jesus' new life helps us to lead a new life too. We've all said at some point that we want another chance, to start again, a second chance to get things right in life. Well, Jesus gives us that chance. He has promised that he will never leave us, that he will be with us forever. He said that he had come to help us live life to the full, life in all its fullness. He even said to the robber on the cross next to him, you will be with me in heaven!

So what is holding you back from living life to the full? Maybe you're worried about money, or work. Maybe you've got a lot on your plate at the moment. Relationships, or waiting to hear from the doctor about results. Sometimes life can be rubbish, we have to admit that. Elsa from Frozen would say 'let it go!' But Jesus, by rising from the tomb says that that will just not do! That that isn't the way life is meant to be. The empty grave is a sign that we can start again in life because God loves us and wants us to love him too. That there is now no barrier between us and God, that he hears our prayers, that he can help us in life.

Christians still face problems, we still have to go through life like anyone else. But Jesus has promised that it can be better, it can be different and one day it will be.

Knowing Jesus Christ brings new life. We not only start again, but we can be a new creation.

We need to be people who live like we believe that. We need to be people who live life saying Life has won over death! Love has won over fear! And that God has won over evil!

If you've never had that chance to live your life saying those things, today is the day to start. Do not leave this Church today without meeting with God, without letting him change your life. Maybe you've never prayed before. Maybe you feel empty at the minute. Jesus says I love you. Do not leave here without declaring that you love him too. Loving Jesus over everything else in life is difficult, but his bursting from the tomb has proven that he loves us more than anything else in all of creation.

Jesus, on the cross, said 'it is finished.' He was right. His work is finished, but it is far from over. The rest is down to us. What will you choose?

Alleulia, Christ is risen! **He is risen indeed, alleluia!**

OR Talk 2

Last month, we made Lent hands, and wrote our prayers on them. Prayers that could change our lives and prayers that could change the world around us.

Jesus, on the cross, used his hands. Into those hands horrible nails were driven through. They were the same hands that created the universe. On Easter Day, today, we celebrate that Jesus didn't stay dead, but that he rose from the grave and that he lives now, that he is with us now. He showed his hands to his frightened friends. They knew it was him because they saw the marks where the nails had been.

Transformation – from death to life. From a cold tomb to a new life. When we know Jesus our lives can be transformed too. He can change us into better people if we let him. I wonder how you have been transformed?

Cardboard testimonies – on a large piece of card write on one side what life is like before God, or before change. On the other write how God can change and transform us or others. 'From darkness... into light', 'eyes shut... God opens.' It doesn't need to be hugely personal, but to focus in on how our Risen Lord transforms and changes us. Write it really big with your marker pen.

Some examples:

I was told God can't – God told me he can!

I felt alone – God is my comfort

Struggle to make friends – Jesus shows me how

Felt unloved – God so loved the world

The world shuts doors – God opens doors.

When people have finished writing their testimonies, invite people to the front (if they want to) to show their cards, negative side first. Demonstrate first, allowing people time to read each side. Prep a few people before the service to come forward to encourage others to do so. This can be surprisingly powerful, allow space and time, or use it as the prayers if you wish.

SONG

God's Family Prays

Loving God, we praise you for Easter,
this time of praise, this time of thanksgiving,
Easter that changes the way we think,
the way we act, the way we live -
that changes everything.

And so we pray now for change in our world,
for change in all those places where there is human need.
We pray for the poor, the homeless, the sick and the hungry.

We pray for the victims of war, for refugees,
for divided communities and countries.

We pray for the holy Church, for N and N our bishops and
for N and N our priests, for our Churchwardens N, N, N, N
and for all who help lead the Church in this place.

We pray for the sorrowful, the fearful,
the troubled in heart and mind.
Those who are sick or ill at this time... N and N

We pray for the oppressed,
for those persecuted for being Christians,
the imprisoned and the exploited.

Living Lord, may the truth of Easter Day
break into each and every one of these situations
and into our own lives, bringing help and healing,
strength and support, comfort and courage,
hope and peace, faith and freedom,
love and life the change that you alone can bring.

End with the Easter collect

God of glory, by the raising of your Son you have broken the chains of death and hell: fill your Church with faith and hope; for a new day has dawned and the way to life stands open in our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

Lord's Prayer (Modern)

SONG

If there is a returning baptism family, see Leader's Insert

**All We believe in God the Father,
from whom every family...**

Church Family Notices can be shared here.

Blessing:

+ God, who through the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ has given us the victory, give you joy and peace in your faith; and the blessing of God Almighty... Amen.

SONG

Song Suggestions:

Christ the Lord is risen today (trad)
Alleluia, give thanks to the risen Lord (trad)
Jesus lives! thy terrors now (trad)
Thine be the glory! (trad)
Our God is a great big God (Hemming)
He is risen! (Baloché/Kendrick)

Any other Easter hymns/songs

Notes

What you'll need for this service:

- Biodegradable balloons, helium, string, tags.
- Pens.

Before the service:

- Remember to pray together or to encourage prayer amongst all your team groups.
- Fill some of the balloons with helium and attach them to the ends of the pews/seats down the church aisle.

God's Family Gathers

*Give a warm welcome to the church. Point out the toilets if you need to.
Draw attention to the Welcome Cards. Keep other notices for the end.*

Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.
And also with you.

*Ask if anyone has any family church news – this may include birthdays.
Introduce the theme and lead into...*

We admit that we sometimes say terrible things...

All Father, forgive us.

We do foolish and silly things...

All Father, forgive us.

+ May Almighty God have mercy upon you, pardon and deliver you from all your sins, confirm and strengthen you in all goodness and bring you to life eternal, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SONG

God's Family Listens

Reading: Acts 2:1-7 & 43-47

Talk

The disciples were waiting in a room, probably scared to tell anyone about Jesus in case they were laughed at, or worse, even killed.

When the Holy Spirit came upon them they were filled with indescribable feelings, emotions and excitement. So much so they couldn't control it. It was overflowing. From that room they went into the streets and they found they could tell people about Jesus in languages they never thought they could speak. They were able to show the love of Jesus in ways they once couldn't – they healed people, they baptised people, they told people from every country about what had happened to Jesus – that he lived, he died and that he rose again from the dead.

The Spirit had given them power that was beyond human grasp: a power that only comes from God alone. We can have that power too. How many times have we felt like the disciples in that upper room? A bit embarrassed to say you go to church, or that you've been baptised, or that you love God.

The power that the Holy Spirit gives us, if we truly believe and trust in God, can help us be confident in what we believe, not to be ashamed of Jesus, but to be bold and strong. When we do that, we find that we can do things we once thought distant and for someone else to do. Like feeding the hungry, clothing the homeless, helping the elderly; we find that we can be extraordinarily generous. Of course anyone in the world can be like that and do those things. That's true, but not everyone can do it and show Jesus' love, which makes it all the more powerful.

The Holy Spirit is with us now and he empowers us to stand for Jesus, to love him all the more and then to tell the world. He gives us gifts to do that. Not only does the Spirit bring love, generosity, patience, tolerance, kindness, but the Spirit of God also helps us to be teachers, pastors, listeners, talkers and preachers, church wardens, prayer people. He even strengthens with love those who give out the hymn books or make coffee. Which are you? Are you filled with the Holy Spirit? What is God asking from you today? Maybe you can join the readers team, do flower arranging, or join the welcome team?

Write a message on a tag – one that is uplifting and powerful. God loves you. God says you are perfect the way you are. It must mention God. Tie it to the end of a balloon and after this service, we will go and let them go outside so that those who find them can know about the power of the Holy Spirit too.

SONG

God's Family Prays

As we hold our balloons and look at them, we pray for our world. A world that doesn't believe that God loves it. A world that would rather fight instead of love. A world that often ignores the needy instead of help. We pray for N and N... Help those who come into positions of power to help the poor, those in need and the vulnerable.

As we hold and look at our balloons, we pray for God's church. We thank you for family and circles of friends and we ask a blessing on those who lead the church, that even more people may see that God loves them. We thank you for giving us your Holy Spirit, he brings us life and joy and comfort. Give us your Holy Spirit again and renew our strength and our love for you.

As we hold and look at our balloons, we pray for those in need. The sick, the ill, those whom we love who need our prayers, especially for N and N. Those suffering from cancer, those who face death. Send your Holy Spirit into their lives and bring healing and wholeness.

End with the Pentecost collect

Holy Spirit, sent by the Father, ignite in us your holy fire; strengthen your children with the gift of faith, revive your Church with the breath of love, and renew the face of the earth, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Lord's Prayer (Modern)

SONG

If there is a returning baptism family, see Leader's Insert

**All We believe in God the Father,
from whom every family...**

Church Family Notices can be shared here.

Go outside to let go of your balloons!

Blessing:

*+ The Spirit of truth lead you into all truth,
give you grace to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord
and strengthen you to proclaim the word and works of God
and the blessing of God Almighty... Amen.*

SONG

Song Suggestions:

For I'm building a people of power (trad)
The Spirit lives (Walk in the light) (trad)
Alleluia! Sing to Jesus (trad)
Breathe on me breath of God (trad)
Holy Spirit (Getty)
Holy Spirit we welcome you (Bowater)

Notes

What you'll need for this service:

- An image of the Trinity, a Trinity knot or design (see USB)
- Pens.
- CD track: 'Three is the magic number' *Schoolhouse Rock* (play as people enter or leave church)

Before the service:

- Remember to pray together or to encourage prayer amongst all your team groups.
- Prepare the image of the Trinity on A4 paper, one for each in the congregation (Prayers)

God's Family Gathers

Give a warm welcome to the church. Point out the toilets if you need to. Draw attention to the Welcome Cards. Keep other notices for the end.

Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.
And also with you.

Ask if anyone has any family church news – this may include birthdays. Introduce the theme and lead into...

We admit that we sometimes say terrible things...

All Father, forgive us.

We do foolish and silly things...

All Father, forgive us.

+ May Almighty God have mercy upon you, pardon and deliver you from all your sins, confirm and strengthen you in all goodness and bring you to life eternal, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SONG

God's Family Listens

Reading: John 16:12-15

Talk

If you've been to a fantastic place, or had the most beautiful meal you've ever eaten, or received the best present you've ever had, sometimes you want to describe it but you just can't. Sometimes, when you've experienced something amazing you can't find the right words to sum it up or describe it.

The word Trinity is one of the hardest of all Christian words to understand. It's made up of two words 'Tri' and 'Unity' – three in unity. It may be the hardest of all Christian words to understand, but it is the most important. It's a word we use to describe how God has worked in our world – as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The word Trinity is the word we use to describe the best thing in our lives and in our world – God.

The Trinity, or God, draws us deeper and he wants us to draw close to him. We believe in a God who is personal and loving and close to us, yet a God who cannot be described in words.

God the Father, who creates and gives life to the universe.
God the Son, who became flesh that we might see God.
God the Spirit, who breathes deep within us and makes God known in the world.

The symbol you were given as you entered church was the Trinity knot, a symbol of the One God in Three. God invites us into himself, into the Trinity, to share his life and experience his love. How do you see God? How have you experienced or known God? What words do you use to say what God is like? Words like 'big' or 'unlimited'. Write those words on your Trinity symbol.

God already knows that we cannot find words to describe him, or sum him up. No words or language really do the job. The word Trinity helps us though. When we've known and seen God working as Father, Son and Spirit, we can call him our own – we can call him our God.

Through Jesus we have access to the Father by one Spirit. Love of Jesus, fill us. Holy Spirit, guide us. The will of the Father be done. Amen.

SONG

God's Family Prays

Let us pray, holding our Trinity symbols in our hands:
Love of Jesus, fill us. Holy Spirit, guide us. The will of the Father be done. Amen.

You are God the creator, giving us richly all things to enjoy. You are Christ the Saviour of the world, made flesh to set us free. You are the Spirit of truth and love, willing to dwell in us. You are holy and blessed. One God, eternal Trinity, be near to us, the people formed in your image.

Lord, you have chosen men and women to serve you in the ministry of your church and given them a perfect example in the person of your Son, Jesus: pour your blessings on... *our bishop... priests... congregations... benefice...*

Father of the universe we praise you for your creation, you have provided mankind with everything it needs for life and health. We remember all who bear the responsibility of leadership... We pray for peace in the world... We remember those who struggle against injustice...

Spirit of peace, comfort those who are suffering, sick or ill. We pray that they may be aware of your comforting presence and know that in your hands they are safe and loved. Lord, we pray for all whose life is saddened by the death of a loved one...

End with the Trinity collect

Holy God, faithful and unchanging: enlarge our minds with the knowledge of your truth, and draw us more deeply into the mystery of your love, that we may truly worship you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Lord's Prayer (Modern)

SONG

If there is a returning baptism family, see Leader's Insert

**All We believe in God the Father,
from whom every family...**

Church Family Notices can be shared here.

Blessing:

*+ God the Holy Trinity make you strong in faith and love,
Defend you on every side and guide you into truth and peace, and the blessing of God Almighty... Amen.*

SONG

Song Suggestions:

Holy, holy, holy (trad)
Father we adore you
Father we love you
Father, Lord of all creation (Tune Abbotts Leigh)
The splendour of the King (Tomlin)
Thou whose almighty word (trad)

Notes

What you'll need for this service:

- Paper chain strips (cut from scrap paper or use self-adhesive strips.)
- Staplers (rather than tape, to speed things up!)

Before the service:

- Remember to pray together or to encourage prayer amongst all your team groups.
- Put paperchain strips in pews.

God's Family Gathers

Give a warm welcome to the church. Point out the toilets if you need to. Draw attention to the Welcome Cards. Keep other notices for the end.

Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.
And also with you.

Ask if anyone has any family church news – this may include birthdays. Introduce the theme and lead into...

We admit that we sometimes say terrible things...

All Father, forgive us.

We do foolish and silly things...

All Father, forgive us.

+ May Almighty God have mercy upon you, pardon and deliver you from all your sins, confirm and strengthen you in all goodness and bring you to life eternal, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SONG

God's Family Listens

Reading: John 20:24-29

Talk

There are people in life that we all admire and love. People we look up to and people we long to be like.

Those who love Jesus try to do as he has asked – to love God and to love our neighbours as ourselves. Some people devote their whole lives in trying to do this as best they can. Christians call these people Saints. Saints are people who try to follow Jesus as best they can.

We can all be saints! All of us here can try to follow Jesus as best we can – if we want to. There are some unusual and unlikely saints! (*Perhaps talk about an unusual example here.*) God calls people from all over the world, from all different backgrounds in many different ways. Some give up their belongings and live in poverty to follow him, some help others, some see miracles happen.

Saint Thomas was a friend of Jesus. He had been with Jesus and known him intimately. He had touched Jesus' hands and seen Jesus in the flesh, you might say that they were good friends! After Jesus had died, he rose again from the dead and appeared to his closest friends in a locked room. Thomas saw Jesus, but he didn't believe it was Jesus: 'I will not believe unless I can touch where the nails went through his hands!' It was Jesus, alive again. Jesus held out his hands and Thomas was able to touch the scars.

We often call Thomas 'doubting Thomas', because he didn't believe it was Jesus. I wonder how we would have reacted if we were Thomas? I probably would have said the same! It's a ghost? Is it really Jesus, didn't he die?

God chose the doubting Thomas to be a saint, to be an example to point to to explain what it means to follow Jesus. Even people who question and doubt can follow him and can be called saints. In fact, we are all sinners, we all doubt. God can change sinners to become saints. Saints all point to Jesus, even if they are unusual, and it's important to keep Jesus in the centre of all we do.

In your pews you'll find some paperchains. The bible says we are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses, and this cloud cheers us on as we try to follow Jesus. You may know some people who are already in this great cloud of saints. And we can be saints too, if we strive to follow Jesus. In your pew you'll find some strips of card. Take one each, write your name on it and make a circle or link from it. This link represents us. In our prayers in a bit, we will be linking these to others to form one long chain. This reminds us that Jesus makes us one – that we are sinners wanting to be saints – that we are all linked together and therefore have great strength in Jesus.

SONG

God's Family Prays

Father God, we thank you for all the saints who have gone before us to help show us how to follow Jesus more closely. We thank you that you call us to be saints too, loving God and loving our neighbour.

Join your own link to the person or people next to you.

Father God, we thank you for your church which is a community of people trying to be saints. We thank you for our bishops N and N, for our priests N and N, our churches and for all who try and show us the way to want us to follow you. **Join your longer chain to those in the pew behind.**

Father God, we thank you that you promise to hear our prayers. We ask special prayers for those who are suffering or ill at this time, especially remembering today N and N. Comfort and guide them in their time of need. **Join the even longer chain to those in the opposite pews.**

Father God, we thank you for those who have gone before us who have been an example to us. May we also share in the prize of heaven to join that great cloud of witnesses and saints.

Hopefully we can join the ends of the chain to make one chain!

Hold the chain up high... *You may have one chain joined in many parts!*

Lord's Prayer (Modern)

SONG

If there is a returning baptism family, see Leader's Insert

**All We believe in God the Father,
from whom every family...**

Church Family Notices can be shared here.

Blessing:

+ May Christ who makes saints of sinners, who has transformed those we remember today, raise and strengthen you that you may transform the world; and the blessing of God Almighty ... Amen.

SONG

Song Suggestions:

For all the saints (trad)
My hope is built on nothing less (Cornerstone) (Tomlin)
Amazing Grace (trad)
Holy, holy, holy (trad)
Praise, my soul the king of heaven (trad)
Jesus, is the name we honour

Notes

August – Jesus at the beach!

What you'll need for this service:

- Have a few buckets and spades and blow up beach toys!
- Print out the I AM signs found on your USB stick.
- You'll need the following for each person (Talk and Prayers)
 - *chunk of bread*
 - *small t-light*
 - *picture of a gate*
 - *some wool*
 - *small heart*
 - *rolled up maps*
 - *small bunch of grapes*
 - a small paper bag to put the above in.

Before the service:

- Remember to pray together or to encourage prayer amongst all your team groups.

God's Family Gathers

Give a warm welcome to the church. Point out the toilets if you need to. Draw attention to the Welcome Cards. Keep other notices for the end.

Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you. **And also with you.**

Ask if anyone has any family church news – this may include birthdays. Introduce the theme and lead into...

We admit that we sometimes say terrible things...

All Father, forgive us.

We do foolish and silly things...

All Father, forgive us.

+ May Almighty God have mercy upon you, pardon and deliver you from all your sins, confirm and strengthen you in all goodness and bring you to life eternal, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SONG

God's Family Listens

Reading: John 6:24-35

Talk

Well its holiday season! We love going to the beach – who loves going to the beach? I love watching the waves – every one of them is different. I love the noise they make too. I love watching people build sandcastles and swimming in the sea. *Hand out the beach items.*

Well in today's reading, Jesus goes to the beach! Well, almost. Jesus spent a lot of time in Galilee, preaching and teaching. Some of Jesus' closest friends were from Galilee.

The Sea of Galilee is the lowest freshwater lake on earth! It is surrounded by mountains and hills. Storms build up incredibly quickly and the weather seems to change in minutes. This was the place where Jesus calmed the storm whilst he was in a boat, and where Jesus walked on water. On the shore of the Sea of Galilee, Jesus cooked breakfast after his resurrection.

I went to the Sea of Galilee a few years ago. It is the most special of seas and at times was the most peaceful place I've ever been too. We swam in the warm waters and we stood in the places that Jesus probably stood.

It was on the shore of this sea that Jesus said: 'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never go thirsty.' He said many other things about himself: 'I am the good shepherd, I am the Light of the World.'

Around the church are various stations with a symbol from the beach. Each station will tell you what Jesus said about himself, and there is something for you to pick up at each station. Go to each station, and when you've collected everything and read what Jesus said, take your seats. Place the items in your AM-bag!!

*I AM the Bread of life (John 6:35) **chunk of bread***

*I AM the Light of the World (John 8:12) **small t-light***

*I AM the Gate (John 10:9) **picture of a gate***

*I AM the Good Shepherd (John 10:11) **some wool***

*I AM the Resurrection and the Life (John 11:25) **small heart***

*I AM the Way, the Truth and the Life (John 14:6) **rolled up maps***

*I AM the true Vine (John 15:5) **small bunch of grapes***

SONG

God's Family Prays

As we eat the chunk of bread, Lord Jesus, you said I am the Bread of Life. Help us to trust in you so that we may never grow hungry.

As we hold our candle, Lord Jesus, you said I am the Light. Thank you for lighting our darkness and for showing us the way. Light up our world.

As we hold our gates, Lord Jesus, you said I am the Gate. Thank you for opening and closing the doors of life to us. Guide us all into pastures green and fresh.

As we hold the wool, Lord Jesus, you said I am the Good Shepherd. Thank you for looking after us when we get lost.

As we hold the small heart, Lord Jesus, you said I am the Life. Help us to live life to the full, living so our lives reflect you.

As we unroll our maps, Lord Jesus, you said I am the Way and the Truth. Help us to follow wherever you lead us and to trust that your love alone is truth in our lives.

As we eat the grapes, Lord Jesus, you said I am the Vine. Help us, the branches, to grow close to you, so that we bear good fruit.

End with this collect

Faithful Creator, whose mercy never fails: deepen our faithfulness to you and to your living Word, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Lord's Prayer (Modern)

SONG

God's Family Goes!

If there is a returning baptism family, see Leader's Insert

**All We believe in God the Father,
from whom every family...**

Church Family Notices can be shared here.

Blessing:

+ The Lord bless you and keep you, the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord look kindly on you and give you peace. And the blessing of God Almighty... Amen.

SONG

Song Suggestions:

I am the bread of life (trad)
Jesus the Lord said (trad)
Light of the world (Hughes)
You are the Vine
The Lord's my shepherd (trad or Townend)

Notes

September – Back to School Service

What you'll need for this service:

- Small wooden crosses
- Holy Water for blessing of school bags

Before the service:

- Remember to pray together or to encourage prayer amongst all your team groups.

God's Family Gathers

Give a warm welcome to the church. Point out the toilets if you need to. Draw attention to the Welcome Cards. Keep other notices for the end.

Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you. **And also with you.**

Ask if anyone has any family church news – this may include birthdays. Introduce the theme and lead into...

We admit that we sometimes say terrible things...

All Father, forgive us.

We do foolish and silly things...

All Father, forgive us.

+ May Almighty God have mercy upon you, pardon and deliver you from all your sins, confirm and strengthen you in all goodness and bring you to life eternal, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SONG

God's Family Listens

Readings: Proverbs 3:1-8 and Luke 2:41-52

Talk

Who is going back or has already gone back to school this month? What things are you thinking about as you prepare to go back? Maybe you're at a new school? Maybe you'll have a new teacher? What will the other children be like? Will it be fun?

Going to school is a huge step for every child. Jesus would have gone to school. He went to school to learn about God. Jesus was also a great teacher, teaching his friends all they needed to know about who he was and teaching them to love God.

When you're at school you will learn so many good things and meet lots of new people. It's important to remember that not everyone feels like that. You might feel a bit scared or alone at points along the way. Maybe you can help someone who feels a bit like that?

It's easy to forget that Jesus, who went to school and was a teacher himself, promised to be with us always, even when things aren't perfect. In a moment we're going to ask God to bless your school bag or your uniforms (*there may be teachers or teaching assistants with diaries etc too*). We ask God to bless them as a reminder that he is with us wherever we go. We carry our bags on our backs, we carry them around

school and use them all the time. God wants to be with us here in church, at home or work, and even at school!

We're also going to give you a small wooden cross to carry in your bag. When you use your bag you might find it in there and remember how much God loves and cares for you. Maybe you might be having a hard day and you might find it in your bag and say a prayer. You might want to hold it as you walk to school. Whatever, when you go back to school I hope you remember that you go back to school with God!

If you'd like to bring your bags etc up to the front, we'll say a prayer of blessing over them.

+ God, bless these bags (uniforms...) and the child who will use it. Help them remember that you are with them as they learn and grow this year. Show them how to love you in school as in church, and give them your wisdom to learn. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Give each child a hand held cross to take to school.

You may wish to 'interview' very briefly one or two of the children/adults.

SONG

God's Family Prays

Prayer for Students (ask students to stand)

Lord our God, in your wisdom and love you surround us with the mysteries of the universe. Send your spirit upon these students and fill them with your wisdom and blessings. Grant that they may devote themselves to their studies and draw ever closer to you, the source of all knowledge. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Prayer for Teachers & Teaching Assistants (ask them to stand)

Lord God, your spirit of wisdom fills the earth and teaches us in your ways. Look upon these teachers. Let them strive to share their knowledge with gentle patience and endeavour always to bring the truth to eager minds. Grant that we may follow Jesus Christ, the way, the truth and the life, forever and ever. Amen.

Prayer for us all (remain seated)

Bless, O God, each one gathered here that we will seek every opportunity to grow in our knowledge and love of you – in our schools, places of work and in our church. Grant that we may see you more clearly, love you more dearly, follow you more nearly.

End with this collect

God of wisdom and might, we praise you for the wonder of our being, for mind, body and spirit.

Be with our children as they begin a new school year.

Bless them and their teachers and staff.

Give the strength and grace as their bodies grow;

wisdom and knowledge to their minds as they search for understanding;

and peace and zeal to their hearts.

We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Lord's Prayer (Modern)

SONG

If there is a returning baptism family, see Leader's Insert

**All We believe in God the Father,
from whom every family...**

Church Family Notices can be given here.

Blessing:

*+ As you journey to work and school each day, God bless you.
As you learn and grow in his way, God strengthen you.
As you teach and share and pray, God guide you.
and the blessing of God Almighty... Amen.*

SONG

Song Suggestions:

One more step (trad)
Be thou my vision (trad)
Father, I place into your hands
Father God I wonder

If you have CCLI you may reproduce this hymn to the tune 'Bright and Beautiful':

<http://www.newhymn.com/03/BackToSchool.htm>

Notes

What you'll need for this service:

- Nine Fairtrade ingredients for cake (see USB stick for recipe)
- A small microwave oven (or use church oven if you have one!)

Before the service:

- Remember to pray together or to encourage prayer amongst all your team groups.
- Prepare the fruits of the Holy Spirit on card (fruit shaped if possible)

God's Family Gathers

Give a warm welcome to the church. Point out the toilets if you need to. Draw attention to the Welcome Cards. Keep other notices for the end.

Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you. **And also with you.**

Ask if anyone has any family church news – this may include birthdays. Introduce the theme and lead into...

We admit that we sometimes say terrible things...

All Father, forgive us.

We do foolish and silly things...

All Father, forgive us.

+ May Almighty God have mercy upon you, pardon and deliver you from all your sins, confirm and strengthen you in all goodness and bring you to life eternal, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SONG

God's Family Listens

Readings: Galatians 5:22-23 and Matthew 6:25-33

Talk

Prepare fruit shaped cards with these words on: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

Life is made up of ingredients that God gives us (*ask volunteers to stand with the fruits on card at the front*) - love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. These are God's values for a fruitful life.

If we were to put these in a cake, I wonder what it would look like?!

Begin to make cake using nine Fairtrade ingredients. Each ingredient stands for a fruit of the Spirit. Cook the cake in small oven or microwave if possible. Have lots of fun whilst making it. Be prepared to make a bit of a mess. You could do this as a ready-steady-cook styled talk. 'What should I put in next?' Wear a silly apron etc. Have fun, but don't take too long.

SONG

This talk is summed up when cake is baked, or at least after the 'here's one I made earlier' moment!

The cake is done and ready to eat. I bet it tastes fantastic! When all of the ingredients are mixed together and baked we have a beautiful cake. If one ingredient is missing it wouldn't taste the same. That's how God wants us to live, live by the fruits of the Spirit: God's ingredients for life.

That's what harvest is about. It's about food and fields and growth, all those things remind us about the good gifts God gives to us. In response, harvest is a reminder that we should live his way, the way he wants, the way according to the fruits of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

God's Family Prays

Short, punchy prayers should include:

- *Thanksgiving for Harvest and all God's gifts to us*
- *For the gifts of the Spirit to be made known in the world and in our lives*
- *For those who are sick or ill at this time*

End with this collect

Creator God, you made the goodness of the land, the riches of the sea and the rhythm of the seasons; as we thank you for the harvest, may we cherish and respect this planet and its peoples, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Lord's Prayer (Modern)

SONG

God's Family Goes!

If there is a returning baptism family, see Leader's Insert

**All We believe in God the Father,
from whom every family...**

Church Family Notices can be shared here.

Blessing:

+ The Lord bless you and keep you, the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord look kindly on you and give you peace. And the blessing of God Almighty... Amen

SONG

Song Suggestions:

Come ye thankful people (trad)
Father I place into your hands
We plough the fields (trad)
Great is thy faithfulness (trad)
Over all the earth he reigns on high
Praise God from whom all blessings flow (trad)

November – Season of Remembrance

What you'll need for this service:

- Small flower pots
- Poppy seeds
- Compost/soil

Before the service:

- Remember to pray together or to encourage prayer amongst all your team groups.
- Set up the various stations to plant poppy seeds during the service.

God's Family Gathers

Give a warm welcome to the church. Point out the toilets if you need to. Draw attention to the Welcome Cards. Keep other notices for the end.

Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you. **And also with you.**

Ask if anyone has any family church news – this may include birthdays. Introduce the theme and lead into...

We admit that we sometimes say terrible things...

All Father, forgive us.

We do foolish and silly things...

All Father, forgive us.

+ May Almighty God have mercy upon you, pardon and deliver you from all your sins, confirm and strengthen you in all goodness and bring you to life eternal, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SONG

God's Family Listens

Readings: Isaiah 25:6-9 and John 11:32-44

Talk

November is the month of remembering. At the start of the month we have All Saints and All Souls day. Then, “Remember, remember the fifth of November, gun powder treason and plot...” And also Remembrance Day, 11th hour, 11th day, 11th month.

Remembering can be a tricky thing for lots of people. We might remember when we were younger. We might remember people who have died. We might remember moments of hurt and pain in our lives.

Remembering is really important to Christians. In fact, you might say it's the most important thing in our faith. Jesus told us to remember. When he had supper with his friends on the night before he died, he broke bread and shared wine. He said that we must do this too, and every time we do to remember him.

Remembering means looking back. We might look back at the people we love. We might look back and remember the wars and those who died fighting in them. We might look back and remember Jesus. Looking

back is good. Although, as Christians we look back at Jesus in order to go forward in our lives. Our minds remember the past, our eyes look forward to the future.

When we look back to Jesus it helps us to understand that the memories of those we love and the memories of war and of pain help us to move forward. In the reading we heard, Jesus's friend Lazarus had died. Jesus was sad, he probably thought about what a good friend Lazarus was to him, about the memories they shared together. Then we heard what happened next, that Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. He gave hope to all who saw and he gives hope to all of us today.

I wonder what it is you remember? What is your earlier memory? Maybe you can remember someone who is no longer here with us?

Whatever it is you remember, it's important to know that Jesus wants us to move forward with him. He wants to fill us with hope and love, just as he did when he raised Lazarus from the dead.

SONG

God's Family Prays

Around the church are a couple of stations. At the station you'll find everything you need to plant some poppies. Plant a poppy and as it grows, remember and look back and thank God for all that has been but also for what will be.

People head to stations to plant poppy seeds. When everyone is back, pray:

Loving God, we thank you that you are here with us now. As we look back to what has been, help us to move forward to what will be. May our future be with you and the memory of past be filled with hope.

Loving God, we pray for all who are sad at this time because they miss a loved one. Help us to support them in their time of need.

Loving God, we pray for places in our world where there is war and violence. We thank you for those who gave their lives in the World Wars to preserve freedom and to regain peace.

End with this collect

Almighty Father, whose will is to restore all things in your beloved Son, the King of all: govern the hearts and minds of those in authority and bring the families of the nations, divided and torn apart by the ravages of sin, to be subject to his just and gentle rule; who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Lord's Prayer (Modern)

SONG

God's Family Goes!

If there is a returning baptism family, see Leader's Insert

**All We believe in God the Father,
from whom every family...**

Church Family Notices can be shared here.

Blessing:

+ God grant to the living, grace; to the departed, rest;
To the church, the Queen, the commonwealth, and all humankind peace and concord; And to us and all
his servants, life everlasting
And the blessing of God Almighty... Amen.

SONG

Song Suggestions:

Give me oil in my lamp (Sing Hosanna) (trad)
Kum ba ya (trad)
Lead us heavenly Father (trad)
Shalom, shalom my friends
May the peace of the Lord God
Peace perfect peace
Our Father, who art in heaven
Faithful One (Doerksen)
Who can sound the depths of sorrow

Notes